

Commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary of NATO in  
Washington, April 1969.



NATO

# Prospects for the Next Fifty Years

By JAVIER SOLANA

**T**he Washington Summit will celebrate the achievements of a unique organization as well as map the way ahead. It will be far more than a 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party. It will formally welcome the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland as new allies. It will unveil a package of measures to draw partners closer to the Alliance. And last but not least, it will present a revised Strategic Concept for the next century.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall ten years ago and the recent launch of the

Euro testify to the change in the strategic environment since the Alliance began fifty years ago. Yet with nine nations clamoring for membership, a dozen more cooperating closely with it both politically and militarily, a major military operation underway in Bosnia, and a growing responsibility in Kosovo, NATO is busier and more in demand than ever.

What accounts for this undiminished dynamism? Has not one of the root causes of its very existence—the common threat—been removed? The explanation of this longevity lies in a unique and enduring political nature and a flexibility to respond to change.

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These characteristics have led the Alliance to shape not only its own security environment, but that of the Euro-Atlantic region from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

### Enduring Foundations

The Atlantic Alliance was forged through the existential threat of a military adversary. But its aim was also to bring democratic North American and European nations together in the wake of a devastating world war. The commonality of purpose and principle shared by the allies did not disappear with the Soviet Union. The political principles of the Washington Treaty which guided NATO through the Cold War remain relevant today.

The Alliance can pride itself on lasting achievements that illustrate its unique nature:

- It connects North America and Europe in a way that corresponds to the wider strategic interests of both sides of the Atlantic. It thus created the foundations for a transatlantic community that today reaches far beyond the security dimension.

- For 40 years its defense efforts enabled the allies not only to protect each other from direct military aggression but also from political intimidation by the Soviet Union. It thus established the notion of the North Atlantic area as a common security space.

- Military cooperation in NATO maximized the effectiveness of allied contributions and ensured a cost-effective defense. Members were thus able to keep their defense expenditures within economically feasible margins and at the same time prevent a potentially negative renationalization of defense.

- It eased the reintegration of Germany into Europe after the War by creating a common security culture of which Germany was a member. By allaying concerns about a united Germany after 1989, it also provided an essential framework for facilitating German unification.

- Although defensive and status quo-oriented in military terms, the allies remained committed to their political goal of a just and lasting order of peace for the entire European continent. The 1967 Harmel Report set out a balanced strategy of maintaining a

sound defense while at the same time pursuing a dialogue with the Warsaw Pact. This dual approach enabled NATO to seize the opportunities provided by détente and arms control. It also proved to be a successful formula for the Alliance to act as a stabilizing framework in winding down the Cold War and in establishing solid patterns of cooperation with former foes.

### The Post-Cold War Era

When the Cold War ended, the political and security balance in Europe changed overnight. The Soviet Union collapsed, leaving more than a dozen new nations in a state of transition. The allies concluded that the second pillar of the dual approach contained in the Harmel Report could be taken to the fullest: to act proactively across the

### enlarging membership erases the notion of a Europe divided into spheres of influence

Euro-Atlantic political space to shape the security environment, manage it, and mitigate the potential for instability and conflict within their immediate neighborhood and beyond. Active cooperation has many manifestations today including the following:

- NATO is pursuing a policy of partnership and outreach in central and eastern Europe and offers assistance and guidance to countries emerging into the new light of democracy and market economy. Alliance initiatives such as the Partnership for Peace (PFP) have helped establish sound civil-military relations, transparent defense budgets, and above all military interoperability. Through cooperation and outreach, NATO contributes to a fundamental restructuring of the military establishments across Europe, planting the seeds of a new security culture.

- It has admitted three new members from central and eastern Europe in response to the unrelenting quest of the new democracies to join the structures and organizations of Western Europe. The policy of prudently enlarging membership offers the reforming

democracies a true prospect of integration and fulfillment of their European and Atlantic aspirations. This process erases old dividing lines and signals the return of nations with their own distinct voice and their commitment to Atlantic values. It also erases the notion of a Europe divided into spheres of influence—a concept that represents excess baggage on our journey to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- NATO is developing a new relationship with Russia. This very large but young democracy is still in search of its role in the new security environment in post-Cold War Europe. The Alliance is engaging this great Eurasian power constructively in discussions about the emerging European security system. Such a system must include it. The NATO-Russia Founding Act signed in May 1997 provides the basis for an increasingly cooperative relationship. The creation of the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council institutionalized regular political consultations and thus paved the way for enhanced military cooperation as well.

- The Alliance is forming a distinct relationship with Ukraine, a nation of pivotal importance for European security and stability. Priority areas for NATO-Ukraine cooperation include peacekeeping, joint training, logistics, education, seminars, exchange of experts, and defense reform. With this assistance a stable, democratic Ukraine can become a net contributor.

- NATO is supporting the growing aspiration of European allies, particularly those in the European Union (EU) and Western European Union (WEU), to take on greater responsibility for such security issues as peacekeeping and crisis management. The new command structure creates a distinct option for European-led crisis operations. By shifting more responsibility to the European allies, a more mature transatlantic relationship can emerge, with a fairer sharing of roles.

- The Alliance is conducting a dialogue with several nations from the southern Mediterranean shores, based on the premise that security in Europe is linked to that of the Mediterranean. This exchange is intended to increase



At the Berlin Wall,  
November 1989.

NATO

understanding by promoting transparency and cooperation on issues of mutual relevance. It will evolve with a view of creating an overall frame of reference specific to the Mediterranean region.

- In Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo the allies provide military back-up to political and diplomatic efforts. They furnished it first through air strikes on Bosnian Serb positions and subsequently by implementing the Dayton accords. NATO is leading the multinational peace forces in Bosnia while ensuring compliance with the military aspects of the accords. It unites a unique coalition of more than 30 nations within a joint military operation to create the secure environment for peace-building and

reconstruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Kosovo, by backing resolute diplomacy with military pressure, it is attempting to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe. It also paved the way for the deployment of a verification mission for Kosovo and supports it through information gathering by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and an extraction force stationed in neighboring Macedonia. It also stands ready to contribute to a political settlement.

### Beyond the Post-Cold War Era

The bipolar system, with its pre-set scenarios and strategies, conditioned NATO security policies and structures. The post-Cold War era has thus led to reorientation and improvisation.

In retrospect the Alliance made correct choices. Its decisions and initiatives resulted in new security relationships that changed the face of Europe.

Its responses to the post-Cold War era have thus created their own dynamics that will last far into the next century.

To carry these positive dynamics forward is the basis for the new NATO vision. But there is more. Beyond the threshold of the next century lie challenges to our transatlantic community. Globalization, for example, offers society opportunities to become more creative and prosperous but also more vulnerable. The rapid dissemination of technology and information offers new ways of production, but these can also help more states develop weapons of mass destruction. Regional conflict will present us with cruel choices between costly indifference and costly engagement. And the competition for natural resources will give projects such as oil pipelines or dams far-reaching ramifications. Finally, an economic





downswing, environmental disaster, or regional conflict could turn migration into severe political turbulence.

The Washington Summit will demonstrate that the adaptation of the 1990s was more than a soft landing from the Cold War; it served as preparation for the future. The policies and initiatives NATO set on track through the decade were in fact investments in its collective ability to meet the challenges of the next century. After four decades of Cold War and one since, the Alliance is now assuming an enhanced roll as a promoter of security.

Fulfilling expanded ambitions demands vision and confidence. NATO has both attributes. Indeed, its political and military agenda is to remain the cornerstone of transatlantic security. It has a long-term strategic agenda for a long-term strategic alliance based on the following conditions:

- North America and Europe must remain linked in security. The transatlantic relationship remains the most successful example of a community of shared values, interests, and pragmatic problem-solving. It has all the ingredients for a successful security policy: a strong commitment to democratic values, a penchant for economic innovation and competition coupled with generosity towards less fortunate neighbors, and effective military tools. With this combination of assets NATO can assist in establishing a democratic and prosperous Eastern Europe, supporting Russian democratic transformation, preventing and managing regional conflicts, and fighting terrorism and other challenges.

- There is a need to concretely develop a stronger European security personality. A self-confident, more mature Europe is a more valuable partner to North America in managing wider security challenges. A Europe capable of coherent military action is a precondition for the Alliance's long-term health. Efforts to build a European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) in the Alliance must come to fruition. The option for the European allies to draw on NATO capabilities for European-led peacekeeping and crisis management must become tangible. Moreover, a new chapter in relations between NATO and



Canadian soldier at Fort Polk, Cooperative Nugget '97.

982 Signal Company, Combat Camera (Thomas Ammons)

the European Union will have to open if this aspiration is to be truly realized

- European integration will continue and NATO must play a pivotal role in this political process. The policy of enlargement will continue after the accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. Other nations are seeking membership in NATO and EU and are demonstrating progress in political, economic, and military reforms and in being good neighbors. Keeping this powerful incentive for reform requires maintaining the momentum of the enlargement process, particularly through a credible open door policy. This policy must strike a balance between ensuring NATO's effectiveness,

### cooperation between member and nonmember countries must deepen

the legitimate aspirations of the new democracies for integration and membership, and overall security and stability in Europe.

- Cooperation between member and nonmember countries must deepen. If future crises and conflicts are to be tackled by a wider coalition of allies and partners, we need mechanisms to set up such coalitions rapidly

and effectively. Thus the NATO policy of partnership and outreach must continue to develop, moving from dialogue and confidence-building into operational matters. This cooperation with partners will be further embedded in Alliance policies and structures and provide us with new options for crisis management and peace support. Political consultation and cooperation with partners will extend to new areas in crisis prevention, regional security cooperation, and disaster relief.

- The Russian Federation has to be included in building security in Europe. Russia will probably remain a country of contradictions—but it nevertheless has legitimate security interests that demand our cooperation. A close NATO-Russia relationship will not mean agreement in every case. We must achieve a relationship

where disagreement in one area does not prevent progress in another. It is already within reach. Our common interests in areas such as managing regional crises and preventing proliferation are clear. The stage is set for a pragmatic strategic partnership.

- In the Balkans long-term stability must be established for Bosnia, which means looking beyond the timeframe of the Stabilization Forces mandate. Once the parties realize that

Signing EUROCORPS  
agreement, January 1993.



reconstruction, not violence, is the only available option, Bosnia and Herzegovina and other countries will have the right to rejoin the international community. In Kosovo, where the international community faces humanitarian, political, and legal dilemmas, a solution must be found that allows the Kosovars a substantial degree of self-government within the confines of Yugoslavia proper. In finding such a solution, we must avoid pitting moral considerations against international law. And we must remember that a security policy that does not take as its point of reference the needs of man and humanity risks the worst possible fate—irrelevance.

- As regards Kosovo's immediate neighbors, Albania and Macedonia, NATO has contributed to stabilizing these countries and helping them deal with an influx of refugees. Macedonia, in turn, is hosting the Headquarters for

the Air Verification Mission and the NATO Extraction Force to support the OSCE verification mission. This new Alliance role of crisis prevention should be explored further. The mechanisms, such as PFP, are in place. Hopefully the prospect of long-term stability, coupled with economic benefits, will draw the entire Balkans back into the European mainstream. The Alliance will be ready to assist when the time comes.

- There is a need to guard against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Nuclear tests by India and Pakistan have brought home the fact that the quest for nuclear weaponry was not only a Cold War phenomenon. So have the clandestine nuclear efforts by other countries. It is no exaggeration to state that proliferation could emerge as one of the greatest security challenges of the next century. Weapons of mass destruction can pose a tremendous risk to our national territories and populations as well as to our troops deployed on

peace support operations. That is why we are preparing a summit initiative on these weapons which, in addition to sharing information among allies, could coordinate Alliance support for nonproliferation efforts.

- There is a need to further improve interoperability and sustainability among allied forces. In the future, these forces must be on the same wavelength and able to move long distances effectively and quickly. They must be able to communicate service to service and ally to ally in a world where information technologies are becoming part of the soldier's basic kit. That is why we are preparing a Defense Capabilities Initiative to address the challenges posed by rapid advances in military technology. In addition we will ensure that the problems posed by transatlantic defense industry restructuring are addressed in a frank transatlantic dialogue.



## The Strategic Concept

NATO will unveil a revised Strategic Concept at the Washington Summit that is designed to guide the activities of the Alliance into the next century. What is the purpose of this document?

*Strategic Concept 1999* will reaffirm the nature and purpose of the Alliance, offer a clear strategic perspective on the evolution of European security, assess the current and future security environment, and set out fundamental efforts that the allies will collectively undertake. In so doing it will recommit NATO members to collective defense and the transatlantic link. And it will take into account not only new roles and missions but a decade of adaptation of objectives the Alliance has pursued vigorously since the end of the Cold War.

But the Strategic Concept is also at heart a planning document. It provides the guidance to defense planners to ensure that the Alliance has the capabilities needed to translate political decision and purpose into military action. The concept is thus the key link between the political agenda and the coordinated and cooperative military activities to carry it out.

To fulfill this role requires a careful and forward-looking assessment of what the Alliance may face and what it will need in the decades ahead. Major aggression is unlikely in the strategic environment of the foreseeable future; but the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area is still subject to a range of unpredictable risks. Developments outside NATO territory, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and more recently Kosovo, can threaten the stability of allied and partner nations. In the final analysis, similar events could threaten our security and result in a collective response.

Thus the revised Strategic Concept will define a new balance between the traditional role of collective defense and new roles in crisis management. Such operations have become an intrinsic part of the more general objective of reinforcing and extending stability. NATO should act where it can offer added value, not assume the role of the global policeman. This policy was underlined as early as 1993: on a

case-by-case basis and in accord with its own procedures, the Alliance is ready to support peacekeeping and other operations under the authority of the U.N. Security Council or the responsibility of OSCE.

All of this is based on a broad approach to security which recognizes the role of political, economic, social, and environmental elements in the more complex and multifaceted post-Cold War security landscape. Indeed, this broad approach has guided the Alliance in its increasing effort to develop effective cooperation with other international organizations such as OSCE, EU, WEU, the Council of Europe and, of course, the United Nations. Our aim—more clearly in our sights than ever—is to construct a security architecture in which the Alliance contribution to security and stability complements and reinforces the contributions to dialogue, international cooperation, and crisis management of these other organizations.

Therefore, in addition to maintaining military capabilities sufficient to prevent war, fulfill the full range of missions, and manage crises affecting security of members, NATO strategy incorporates the continued pursuit of dialogue, cooperation, and partnership. It pursues a balanced partnership between the European and North American allies through the development of ESDI within the Alliance. This will enable Europeans to make a more coherent contribution as well as allow them to act by themselves.

*Strategic Concept 1999* will draw individual elements of the NATO agenda into a single, coherent strategic framework. Whether it be enlargement, crisis management, European defense integration, a strong partnership with Russia, closer relations with our PFP partners, transforming the latent potential of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) into a substantive forum for consultation and cooperation, or any other part of the agenda I have described—these are all organic parts of a coherent security strategy. Individual NATO programs and initiatives are part and parcel of a basic reordering of Euro-

Atlantic security. This revamping is more than just the healing of the wounds of the Cold War. NATO is preparing for a more promising future in which all countries in Europe will feel more secure and in which instability and mistrust should disappear.

The Washington Summit will thus provide a Strategic Concept for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It will offer a perspective on future security challenges that may face the allies collectively or individually. It will show that we can best tackle them through teamwork. It will give us guidelines on how to prepare our forces for such contingencies, taking the short, medium, and longer-term view of what the future may hold. But it will also be an active document, a tool by which we can shape and mitigate what lies ahead, a proactive approach to expand the potential of like-minded democracies in ensuring the security of their people, values, and territory.

Barely three days after the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in April 1949, the American commentator Walter Lippman wrote the following assessment:

*The pact will be remembered long after the conditions that have provoked it are no longer the main business of mankind. For the treaty recognizes and proclaims a community of interest which is much older than the conflict with the Soviet Union and, come what may, will survive it.*

These words have proven true. At the end of this century Europe and North America have emerged as the most successful community of nations in history. It is today, as it has always been, a community of values as well as interests, of vision as well as pragmatism, of continuity as well as change. The Alliance epitomizes these virtues. That is why it will remain an indispensable foundation of our security for another 50 years.

**JFQ**

**This article is adapted from a speech delivered in Rome on January 25, 1999.**